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GWU Student to Represent Community in Miss North Carolina Scholarship Pageant

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Office of University
Communications

June 15, 2016

“Miss Shelby” Rachel Leigh Möwer (’19) to Compete in Raleigh June 22-25

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – A Gardner-Webb student and longtime member of the local community will contend for a state title later this month that could ultimately give her a chance to compete in the 96th Miss America pageant this fall.

Rachel Leigh Möwer, a rising sophomore nursing major at GWU, competed in a Miss America preliminary pageant held in Shelby, N.C., last fall. When she was crowned Miss Shelby, she earned the opportunity to compete in the Miss North Carolina Scholarship Pageant, scheduled for June 22-25 in Raleigh. The winner of that event will represent her state at the Miss America Scholarship Pageant, held in Atlantic City, N.J. in September. Möwer has worked hard to balance the demands of school and local appearances.

“Since being crowned Miss Shelby—and with a full course load at school—I’ve visited more than 30 classrooms and a few group assemblies in Cleveland County and in surrounding communities as well,” she shared. “It’s been busy, but very rewarding.”

Following a 40-year hiatus, the Miss Shelby preliminary pageant returned in 2014, offering local young women an opportunity to compete for the chance to represent their city and community at the highly competitive Miss North Carolina state pageant. Born and raised in Kings Mountain, Möwer was named the Miss Shelby Outstanding Teen just two years ago, and she knew one day she wanted to compete for the Miss Shelby title for the personal development and community service opportunities.

“You really learn how to market yourself—how to pinpoint your strengths and weaknesses—and how to market those strengths and overcome your weaknesses,” Möwer explained. “I’ve definitely learned how to be more confident in talking to people and representing who I am.”

In the Miss America Pageant Organization, contestants must actively work in their communities to raise awareness and participate in service opportunities related to an issue of their choice. In 2015, she established “Breathe Hope: Raising Awareness of Cystic

Fibrosis (CF),” a non-profit organization dedicated to raising money and knowledge about the disease. Her inspiration for the platform is Shelby native Madison Allison, a young CF fighter who is close to Möwer’s heart.

“I am not personally affected by cystic fibrosis. No one in my family has been diagnosed,” Möwer shared. “But when I met Madison in 2013, she became part of my family. We’ve really bonded.”

For Möwer, deciding to focus on raising awareness for the disease offered an opportunity to make a tangible difference for both Madison and a wider community of CF fighters.

“The foundation receives no government funding. Their resources are all through private donations,” she offered. “So it’s very important to support the CF Foundation because there is no cure for CF and they receive no federal or state assistance for research. My goal is to raise \$5,000 for the foundation before I relinquish my Miss Shelby title.”

Over the last several months, Möwer has participated in intensive training and practice sessions to refine her skills and ensure that she is well prepared for the state pageant competition—all while staying on top of her studies and completing her first year as a full-time Gardner-Webb student. “I always wanted to go to Gardner-Webb. I’m very family oriented and GWU has always been my top choice,” she reflected. “The Christian, faith-building atmosphere initially attracted me to the campus and I’ve loved every step of the way. I can’t wait to spend the next three—or maybe even five years if I pursue my master’s—at Gardner-Webb.”

To learn more about Rachel Leigh Möwer’s road to Miss North Carolina, listen to the WGWG.org podcast below. To vote for Möwer as People’s Choice (and a chance to send her into Miss North Carolina’s Top 11), click [here](#). For more information about the Miss North Carolina Scholarship Pageant, visit [MissNC.org](#).

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 55 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.